

ST. MARK'S 1st PRATIE  
ANGLO-CATH CHURCH  
1953-1953  
by  
Anthonio Cochrane  
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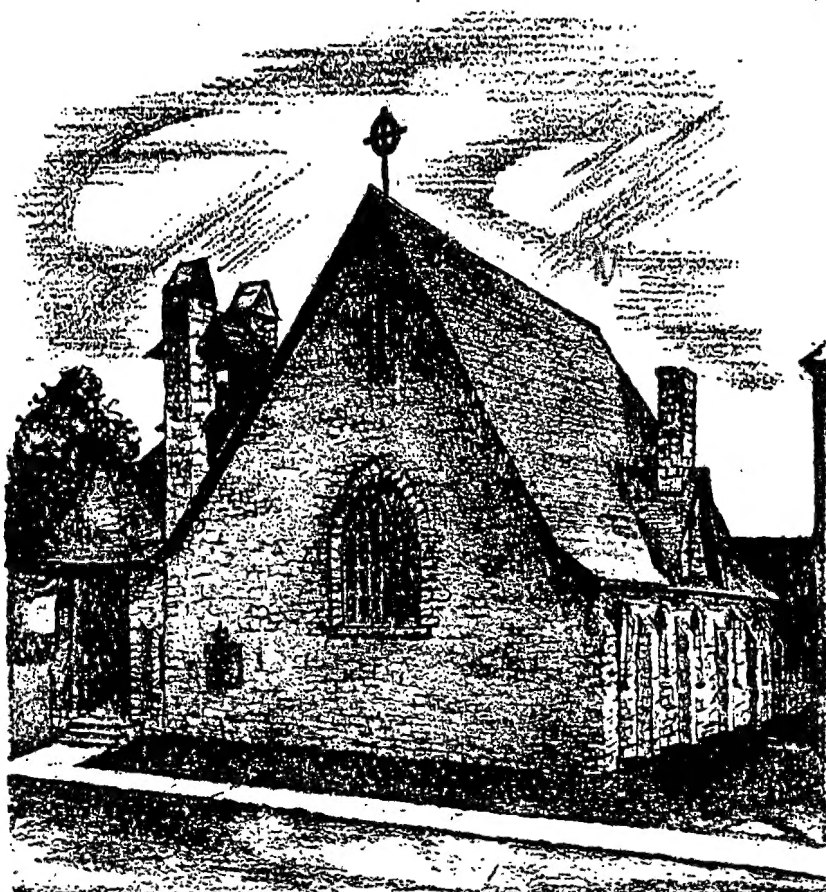
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THE STORY OF

# St. Mary's la Prairie Anglican Church

1853-1953



Commemorating the founding of St. Mary's la Prairie Parish,  
Portage la Prairie

by

ARCHDEACON COCHRANE, 1853



PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

MANITOBA

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CLASSIFICATION

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SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF RUPERT'S LAND

TRINITY HALL  
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

ARCHBISHOP  
THE MOST REV. L. RALPH SHERMAN  
M.A., B.LITT., D.D.

SECRETARY-TREASURER  
R. H. POOK  
TELEPHONE 923 028

Lent, 1952.

To the Wardens, Vestry & Parishioners  
of St. Mary's Church, Portage la Prairie:

Your Rector has reminded me of your  
Hundredth Anniversary which falls in June of  
next year and has asked me to write a message  
for your Anniversary Booklet which you are  
already preparing. I very gladly accede to  
this request.

Yours has been a history of which you  
and all others may well be proud. And I know  
that the Booklet when it appears will make  
very interesting reading with its record of  
the early days and the personal reminiscences  
of many. I will greatly look forward to  
reading it.

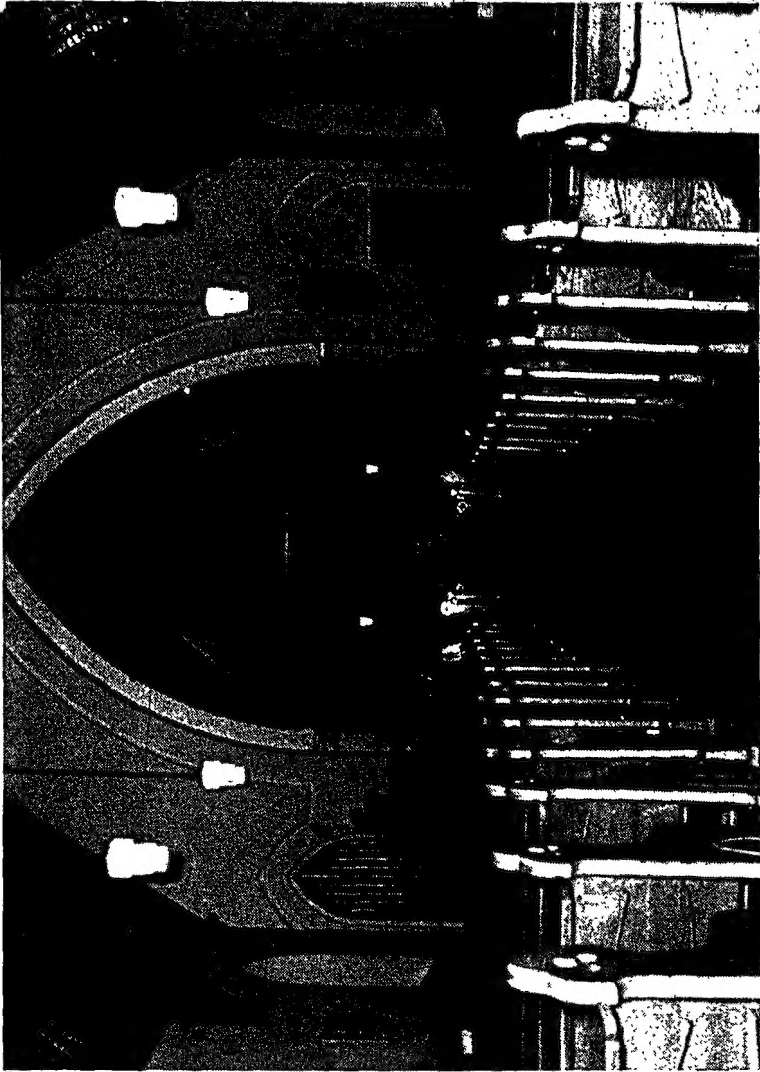
How true it always is that "Other men  
laboured and ye are entered into their labours".  
With remembrance and thanksgiving we dedicate  
ourselves to the Master's work in the days that  
lie ahead.

Wishing you all every Blessing,

Faithfully yours,

*L. Ralph Sherman*





View of the Interior of St. Mary's Church Looking Towards the Altar.

# A Message From The Present Rector of St. Mary's La Prairie

I have always considered it a great privilege and a great responsibility to be the clergyman in charge of this old Church and Parish during the past twenty-one years. And now in this year of 1953 I realize that I am in charge of a parish that has persisted and survived through 100 years. We owe much to those who have gone before us. You may be sure that it was not always with the rising tide of some pleasant prosperity that the story of this church over so long a spell of time was continually engaged. We do not know in exact detail all the experiences that befell it for our records are but scanty over this long period of years. But we do know that our church has survived and is strong today because it possesses some inner vital secret which goes on in spite of all its outward experiences. The Church itself has persisted and has continued its witness down to this present day. It should be therefore with gratitude in our hearts to God and deep thanksgiving that we celebrate this 100 years in the history of our parish. We should greatly rejoice to think that this church still endures and that we have been privileged to be associated with it and to help to maintain its witness and to share in its work.

No one who thinks imaginatively of those who have gone before us in this place, of their devotion to God and their desire to build worthily to His Glory, can fail to be impressed by the goodness of our heritage. We have entered into that which our forefathers built with loving labour and selfless sacrifice. Let us not forget those who shall come after us, but let us pray that in the years to come they may look back, as we have done, and find no cause to be ashamed of what we, in our turn, have handed on to them.

CANON P. C. BAYS,

Rector of St. Mary's la Prairie.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The help and advice of the Rev. T. C. B. Boone, Archivist of the Diocese of Rupert's Land and that of Mr. J. L. Johnstone, Librarian of the Province of Manitoba is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

Eldon F. Simms, B.A., M.Ed.



St. Mary's la Prairie, 1953. (Most westerly parish established by Archdeacon Cochrane in 1853).



ARCHDEACON COCHRANE  
1853



CANON P. C. BAYS  
1953

# THE STORY OF ST. MARY'S LA PRAIRIE

"When Archdeacon Cochrane visited Portage la Prairie in 1851, he found a country waiting to be exploited both in the field of missionary endeavour and also that of agriculture; and there was none to 'let or hinder', the man of vision who would enter the open door".\*

Archdeacon Cochrane was the prime mover in the establishment of Anglican Parishes west of the Red River Settlement along the Assiniboine. Having laboured for over a decade among the settlers along the Red River, north of the Forks, in the Parishes of St. John's, St. Andrew's and St. Peter's, he turned westward in 1851 filled with the vision of establishing missions to the peoples along the Assiniboine River.

In the spring of 1851, the Archdeacon purchased from Chief Pe-quak-kan, the point of land on which the City of Portage la Prairie now stands, the purchase price being paid in goods. The land comprising the Island, opposite Slough Road (Crescent Road) was bought for the agreed payment of a bushel of wheat from every settler during the lifetime of the chief; an agreement which was duly honoured. A number of parishioners from St. Andrew's with their families accompanied the Archdeacon to form the nucleus of the new parish of St. Mary's la Prairie in 1853. Among these were Peter, William and John Garrioch, Fred Bird, Charles and Martin Cummins, Gavin Garrioch, John and Henry Hudson and several others.

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Archdeacon and his flock was the building of a church. While it was under construction, Sunday services were held in Jack Anderson's dwelling house which stood on the north bank of Crescent Lake at the foot of present Fourth Street S.E. It was a twenty foot square log building with planks laid on blocks for seats. A table at the front served as pulpit, desk and altar.

The site of the original church was close by the river and east by The original St. Mary's Church, 1853 (Taken from a sketch by A.C. Garrioch) south of where the City of Portage la Prairie now stands. Rev. A. C. Garrioch gives the following description of the first church of St. Mary's:

"The church was seventy feet long by thirty feet wide and fourteen feet high to the eaves. At the north end was a ten foot square tower sixty feet high with a spire surmounted by a cross. The walls of the church were of oak logs hewn on two sides. The church and tower were clapboarded and whitewashed and the roof of the church covered with unpainted oak shingles. Inside the church walls were plastered with clay and a mixture of finely chopped hay, and whitewashed. There was no chancel, a feature

\*First Furrows — Rev. A. C. Garrioch





The original St. Mary's Church, 1853 (taken from a sketch by A. C. Garrioch)

of all churches built in Archdeacon Cochrane's time, but about ten feet of the south end was railed off for this purpose. Two pulpits, eight feet high, stood in each corner of this enclosure. A communion table stood in the centre. The pews were made entirely by the people themselves. Each pew had two heavy oak ends with curved tops, and book rests and kneeling boards were attached."

This was the church in which the congregation of St. Mary's worshipped for twenty-two years from 1855 to 1877.

In 1865, Archdeacon Cochrane resigned from St. Mary's and was succeeded by his son-in-law the Rev. Henry George who was then in charge of the mission at Westbourne. Mr. George made several changes in the church furnishings and in the manner of conducting the services. The high pulpits were removed and a chancel was made by means of seven feet high partitions dividing the railed-in area into three sections. The pulpit was placed in the left section and in the right a small barrel organ with pipes was installed. A lectern and prayer desk were placed outside the railing of the chancel.

The introduction of organ music brightened up the services considerably. A boy turned a crank to make the organ work and the barrels with a few tunes on each had to be changed for different hymns during the service.

In 1866, the old school house, one quarter mile east of the church was moved and rebuilt quite close to the church parsonage. It became something in the nature of a parish hall. However, the trend of settlement westward doomed the old site as impractical and the church by the river became more or less isolated. In 1869 the school was moved three quarters of a mile west into town proper to a site on the banks of the Slough (Crescent Lake) on Parish Lot 65 where it was successively used as a school, a church, a concert hall and a dwelling house. Soon after this, Sunday evening services were held in the school which was converted into a small church with morning services still being held in the River Church.

The Rev. Mr. George passed away on May 27th, 1881 while still on active duty. During his incumbency several developments of interest had taken place. On April 9th, 1866, the first election of vestrymen had taken place. The following men were members of this first St. Mary's vestry: J. J. Setter, F. Bird, John Garrioch, William Garrioch, Peter Garrioch, Thomas Anderson, John Corrigan, Peter Henderson and Vestry Clerk A. C. Garrioch.\*\* The vestry met the following evening at the parsonage. One month previously, the custom of taking an offertory collection (a wooden box on the end of a rod) had been introduced so that the vestry had its first financial report at this initial meeting. One resolution passed was to the effect that five pounds be sent to the Bishop of the Diocese as the parish's first contribution to the missionary funds of the Diocese. A young people's society was organized that same year.

\*\*St. Mary's Church, Portage la Prairie was organized as a parish on April 9th, 1866. A. C. Garrioch, Correction Line, Page 280.



St. Mary's Church, 1882

For a short period after the death of the Rev. H. George, the Rev. T. N. Canham was rector. A testimony of the feelings of the congregation towards him was evidenced in the presentation of a purse of \$335, a large sum in those days, when he resigned in 1882. It was during his time that the little town church became too small and the Court House (the present hospital) was used temporarily.

In the spring of 1882, Rev. A. L. Fortin took charge of St. Mary's. Immediately plans were made to build a new church. At the time, the boom of 1881 had just collapsed and the people were experiencing difficult days. It was decided to acquire a new site still further to the west as the town was expanding in that direction. The present site on Ann Street was purchased.

The new church was a frame structure capable of seating four hundred. The interior consisted of nave, transepts and choir stalls. Its acoustic properties were good. A fair-sized organ was installed with Professor Snell acting as organist. Anthems, solos and duets were often rendered by the choir in the new church.

During Mr. Fortin's incumbency a Ladies' Aid Society was started. Mrs. Fortin was the first president. Mr. Fortin resigned in 1885 and for nearly a year the pulpit was filled by visiting members of St. John's College staff. The Rev. A. S. H. Windsor acted as rector for a short time towards the end of this period.

In the spring of 1886, the Rev. C. N. Jeffrey was appointed rector of St. Mary's. He found the large frame church badly in need of repairs; the rectory in neglected shape and the whole property heavily mortgaged with payment of both principal and interest in arrears. Things were as bad as they could be and any change was bound to be for the better. Under wise management the parish satisfied its creditors and a solution was found to its financial difficulties. The Ladies' Aid assisted to a great extent in improving the furnishings of the church.

In 1888 Canon MacMorine became rector and he found the parish still in financial difficulties but by 1897 the mortgage was paid off. Unfortunately two months later the whole building was declared unsafe and church services had to be held in the Town Hall. Plans for a new church were put under way. The present church was opened January First, 1899. The following is an account of this event from the columns of a contemporary newspaper:

THE MANITOBA LIBERAL      Saturday, December 31, 1898

#### THE NEW CHURCH

#### IMPRESSIVE DEDICATION OF ST. MARY'S THIS WEEK

"Large congregations present at the opening services on Thursday. The Archbishop of Rupert's Land and Bishop of Qu'Appelle present.

Notwithstanding the cold and keen wind prevailing Thursday morn-



St. Mary's Church, 1899

ing, a large congregation assembled to participate in the dedicatory services of the new St. Mary's Church. The seats reached here on Wednesday but not in time for all to be placed in position. The edifice is solid stone, 35 by 80 feet and seated to accommodate a congregation of 300. The total cost of the church will be in the neighborhood of \$8,000, of which sum the people of the parish have already raised \$4,000 and arranged for a loan of \$3,550.

His Grace, the Archbishop of Rupertsland was present and conducted the dedicatory services and was accompanied by the Bishop of Qu'Appelle,

Rev. Dean O'Meara, Rev. Canon Matheson, Rev. F. V. Baker, rector of All Saints Church, Rev. W. T. Mitton, rector of Christ's Church, Winnipeg; C. Cunningham of MacGregor, A. C. Garrioch of Poplar Point and W. P. Cahan of Woodlands, who were joined here by the rector of St. Mary's, Rev. S. MacMorine.

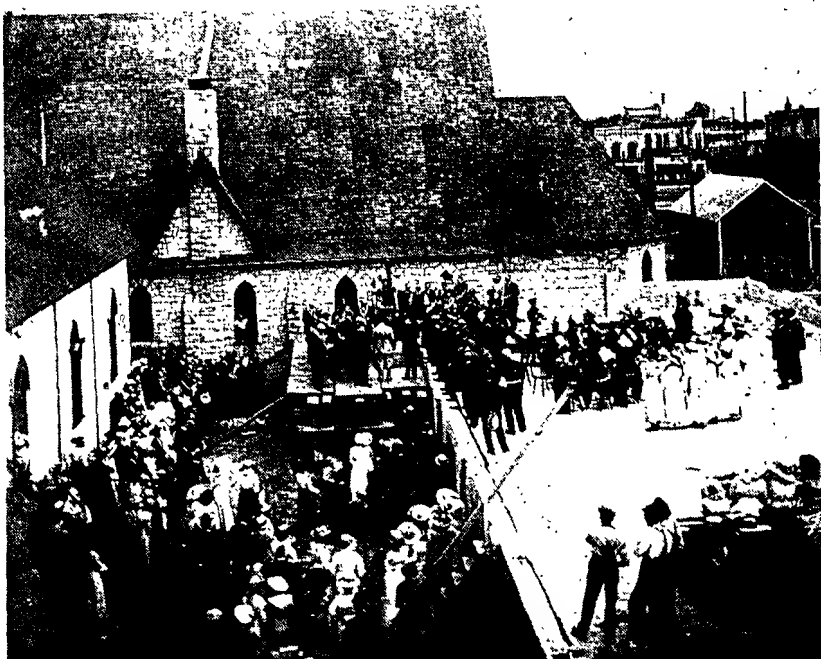
The first part of the services consisted of Morning Prayer which was taken by the rector; Rev. F. V. Baker and Canon Matheson reading the lessons. His Grace, the Archbishop delivered the dedicatory prayer, followed by the first portion of the Communion Service read by the Bishop of Qu'Appelle and the Rev. Dean O'Meara. The discourse preached by the Archbishop of Rupertsland was excellent, based on the text, 'God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth'. John IV-24. The people of the parish were congratulated on the erection of such a handsome and substantial church especially as they had just finished paying for the old building. Special music was rendered by the choir under the leadership of Mr. C. Burley with Cecil Dickson at the organ and among other pieces included the Te Deum and an anthem, 'Thine O Lord is the Glory'.

The visiting clergymen in conversation with a Liberal reporter spoke very highly of the musical service making particular reference to the playing of the young organist. A collection was taken up and \$52.00 realized for the building fund.

The services were continued in the evening when Rev. Canon Matheson was the preacher and the church was again crowded, among the congregation being representatives of all the other denominations. Tomorrow the final opening services will be held; his lordship the Bishop of Qu'Appelle, the Rev. John Grisdale D.D., preaching in the morning and administering Confirmation in the evening."

The new church cost \$8,200 and of this all but \$3,700 was paid within the year. A pipe organ, the gift of some members of the congregation was installed and the old rectory which had been sold in the eighties when the church was in financial difficulties was repurchased from the Burleys.

This was the second church which Canon MacMorine had helped to build in Portage la Prairie. In 1890 he had started a small chapel close by where the old original church had stood near the cemetery. This church was



Laying the Foundation Stone of St. Mary's Parish Hall, 1913

known as St. Mary's Chapel and it served the people in that area who were a long way from the town church. This chapel was kept open until the early 1900's when it was closed and finally disposed of for \$100 in 1916. In 1918 the cemetery was transferred to the City of Portage under an agreement that it would continue to be used for burial purposes and be kept up by the City.

Canon MacMorine died on March 9th, 1909 shortly after resigning as rector of St. Mary's. In June of that year the Rev. J. I. Strong was appointed his successor but his ministry was comparatively short, ending in 1911. During his incumbency the church envelope system of giving was introduced.

In April, 1911, Canon D. T. Parker became rector of St. Mary's. The following organizations were in existence by that time: the Sunday School, the Ladies' Aid, the Women's Auxiliary, Girls' W.A. and a Men's Club. The Church was in a good financial position. An every member canvass by the laymen of the parish was introduced that year with excellent results. The Sunday School had by this time grown so large that a new parish hall became an urgent necessity. In a canvass made of the parish about \$8,000 was secured in cash or notes. The new hall was finished in 1913 and occupied by the Sunday School. By 1921 the church revenue was over \$8,000 annually with the church proper too small to hold the evening congregations so that these services were held in the parish hall for a time. Canon Parker remained in charge of St. Mary's until September, 1928. His pastorate marked a period of great growth and prosperity.

For some time after Canon Parker resigned, the services were carried on by visiting clergy from St. John's College and Winnipeg Churches. In April, 1929, the Rev. J. W. M. Swan became rector and remained in charge until the end of January, 1932. During this time the Parish Magazine was started and proved its worth from the first issue. A branch of the Anglican Young Peoples' Association was added to the growing list of church organizations.

On February first, 1932, the present rector Canon P. C. Bays took charge of the parish. He has served the parish of St. Mary's and the community at large for the past twenty-one years with the exception of an interval between 1942 and 1945 when he was on active service with the Canadian Army in World War II as Chaplain to His Majesty's forces. Rev. M. A. Creal was curate-in-charge during this time.

The period of Canon Bays' ministry has been one in which great upheavals have occurred in the world at large with their inevitable impact on the local parish. Between 1932 and 1940 the business depression which swept the nation like a hurricane had its effect on St. Mary's as reflected in lower revenues and increased calls for social services from the church. It was a period of great distress to the people and Canon Bays along with his faithful flock had hard weather in keeping the parish on a solvent basis. With the coming of World War II and Canada's participation in it, the church took an active part in providing social activities for the local



troops and in looking after comforts for the men overseas.

The close of World War II found the people of St. Mary's drawing closer together with a greater understanding of the need for the church in their lives. The men returning from overseas found the church in a strong condition and added their influence to its growth and support.

The past few years have been years of progress. The beauty of the church has been greatly enhanced by the installation of stained glass windows throughout; the Sunday School has grown, particularly in the primary department and all the various organizations of the church are in a flourishing condition. All Saints Chapel, a small room of worship, in the basement of the church has been furnished and dedicated. Plans are now under way to fully rebuild our present organ as a memorial to all the faithful workers in the parish over the past hundred years. The financial status of the parish is excellent. The laymen have been more and more active in this regard and an increasingly greater interest is being taken in all phases of the church activities by the members of the congregation.

The year 1953 closes one hundred years of active endeavour by the members of St. Mary's Parish. Now more than ever before, the challenge to the church still grips the imaginations of men of vision as it did the pioneers of 1853 when they travelled westward to Portage la Prairie to lay foundations of the Parish of St. Mary's la Prairie upon which, succeeding generations of devoted men and women have built so well.

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## The Church and Education

It appears that even before a church building had been established at Portage la Prairie, a mission school had been started by Archdeacon Cochrane in 1851. Two years later with the influx of settlers from St. Andrews, the first church was built. The school continued in operation under church auspices until Manitoba became a province in 1870 when education came under the control of the provincial authorities. However, clergymen continued to inspect the schools until 1886 when the first provincial school inspectors were appointed. Thus the church was directly involved in school administration until 1870 and indirectly until 1886.

# St. Mary's La Prairie

## VESTRY: 1866

J. J. Setter  
 F. Bird  
 John Garrioch  
 William Garrioch  
 Peter Garrioch  
 Thomas Anderson  
 John Corrigan  
 Peter Henderson  
 A. C. Garrioch — Clerk  
 (Two of foregoing appointed wardens. Records not clear on this).

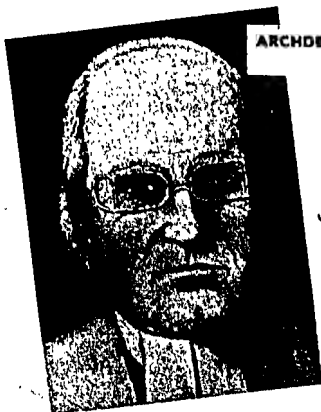
## VESTRY: 1953

Honorary Warden — R. A. Price  
 Rector's Warden — J. C. Cadham  
 People's Warden — C. E. Cole  
 W. P. Graham  
 M. A. Kains  
 W. Burton  
 W. H. Bradley  
 J. L. Fauschou  
 G. B. Key.  
 J. Pragnell  
 B. Rowley  
 R. Jacobs  
 C. C. Miller  
 A. H. Thorpe  
 E. F. Simms

## ORGANIZATIONS — 1953

SUNDAY SCHOOL ..... Superintendent, Mr. M. A. Kains  
 LADIES' AID ..... President, Mrs. G. B. Key  
 WOMEN'S AUXILIARY ..... President, Mrs. S. Williams  
 CHOIR ..... President, Mrs. E. F. Simms  
 ORGANIST ..... Mr. Douglas Bull  
 GIRL'S AUXILIARY ..... Leader, Mrs. C. King  
 LITTLE HELPERS ..... Director, Mrs. B. Handford  
 JUNIOR AUXILIARY ..... Leader, Mrs. C. Stiles  
 LADIES' EVENING GUILD ..... President, Mrs. J. Pragnell  
 ALTAR GUILD ..... President, Mrs. W. Burton  
 BOY SCOUTS ..... Leader, Mr. Sid Smith  
 WOLF CUBS ..... Leader, Mr. Ray Donald  
 A.Y.P.A. .... President, James Portman  
 MEN'S CLUB ..... President, Mr. B. Rowley

RECTORS WHO SERVED ST. MARY'S LA PRAIRIE — 1853-1953



ARCHDEACON COCHRANE  
1853-1865



REV. H. GEORGE  
1865-1881



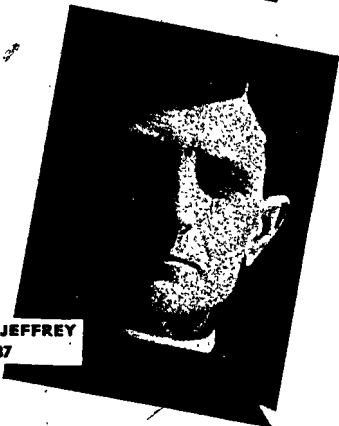
REV. T. N. CANHAM  
1881-1882



REV. A. L. FORTIN  
1882-1885



REV. A. S. WINDSOR  
1885



CANON C. N. JEFFREY  
1886-1887

RECTORS WHO SERVED ST. MARY'S LA PRAIRIE — 1853-1953



CANON MacMORINE  
1888-1909



REV. J. STRONG  
1909-1911



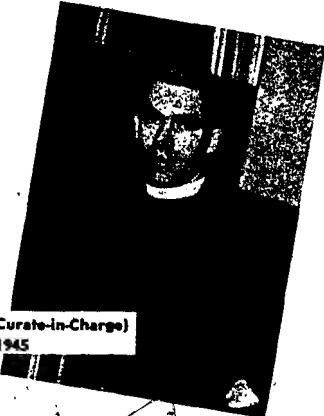
CANON D. T. PARKER  
1911-1928



REV. M. SWAN  
1928-1932



CANON P. C. BAYS  
1932-



REV. M. CREAL (Curate-in-Charge)  
1942-1945

# In Memoriam

**HONOUR ROLL**  
**ST. MARY'S LA PRAIRIE**  
**1914-1918**

**196 Names Inscribed**

**HONOUR ROLL**  
**ST. MARY'S LA PRAIRIE**  
**1939-1945**

**200 Names Inscribed**

**"Greater Love Hath No Man Than This That A Man Lay  
Down His Life For His Friends."**

**PRO DEO ET PATRIA**

## **MEMORIAL WINDOWS: (Stained Glass)**

### **GOOD SHEPHERD WINDOW (Sanctuary)**

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Captain Lloyd Burton of Princess Patricia's Light Infantry — Killed in action in Italy, September 17th, 1944 — age 24 years. Erected by a loving family.

### **ST. JOHN WINDOW (Sanctuary)**

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Walter B. Pragnell, 1884-1942; and Arthur Pragnell, 1914-1926. Erected by a loving family.

### **THE TIMOTHY WINDOW (South Side)**

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of those men from this parish who gave their lives in the war 1939-1945. Erected by the parishoners.

### **THE SAINT PAUL WINDOW (South Side)**

To the Glory of God and in proud remembrance of those men from this parish who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918. Erected by their comrades.

### **THE CHRIST WINDOW (South Side)**

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Helen M. Newman and Colin C. Newman. Erected by their children and grandchildren.

### **THE SAINT MARY WINDOW (South Side)**

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of those rectors who have so faithfully served this parish. Erected by G. P. Armstrong M.D.

### **THE ANGEL WINDOW (South Side)**

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of James A. Marshall, 1858-1945, and his wife Emma J. Marshall, 1859-1941. Placed here by the family.

### **THE WEST WINDOW**

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Flt. Sgt. George Perry Armstrong, Age 19 years. Killed in Italy November 25th, 1943. Erected by his parents.

### THE ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST WINDOW (North Side)

To the Glory of God and in Memory of all the Boys and Girls who have attended the Sunday School since the foundation of the parish in 1853. Erected by St. Mary's Sunday School, 1947.

### THE FAITH WINDOW (North Side)

To the Glory of God and in Grateful Memory of many faithful women, who have served this Church since the founding of the parish in 1853, A.D. Erected by the women of St. Mary's, 1946 A.D.

### ST. ALBAN WINDOW (North Side)

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Emma S. Cadham and John O. Cadham who arrived in this parish March, 1882. Erected by the family.

### LIGHT OF THE WORLD WINDOW (North Side)

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Kathleen H. Garland — 1874-1947, and John J. Garland — 1873-1925, who served on this vestry 31 years.

### MEMORIAL PLAQUES:

1. Erected by St. Mary's Sunday School. To the Glory of God and in memory of Thomas O. Cadham. Died March 8, 1920. Aged 28 years.
2. To the Glory of God and in loving memory of John James Garland. Born September 5, 1873. Entered in Rest March 9, 1925. "They are not dead who live in hearts they leave behind. In those whom they have blessed they live a life again".
3. To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Walter B. Pragnell. Born October 13, 1884. Died December 19, 1942. A member of St. Mary's Church for 30 years. Erected by his loving wife and family.
4. In memory of Lieut. Charles Clendon Heath, 28th Battalion, C.E.F. Killed in action September 15th, 1916. Aged 22 years. "He never flinched, and he lives on in God's Paradise, near to us all".
5. To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Florence Rose Mary Ramez, who entered into rest June 30th, 1929 and who was for many years a faithful and devoted worker in this parish. Erected by the Sunday School.
6. Erected to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Emma Isobel Maria Jolly who bequeathed to St. Mary's Parish a fund to provide a memorial of her father and mother, Hugh J. and Emily Jolly. It has been applied on the purchase of a rectory. "Their works do live after them" Rev. 14:13.
7. Plaque on wall in Chancel: 1837-1903. To the Glory of God. Charles Burley who died November 18th, 1903, aged 65. This tablet is erected in memory of a loving father by Thomas and Alice Milroy.

## MISCELLANEOUS MEMORIALS:

**THE BIBLE** — To the Glory of God and in loving memory of James W. Ramez. Died December 23rd, 1946. Who for 25 years faithfully served St. Mary's Sunday School. He was also a lay reader in this parish church. Presented by the family, February 1948.

**THE LECTERN** — To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Flying Officer Chas. Maxwell Mair — Age 23. Killed in Italy November 25th, 1943. Erected by the family. "Rest eternal grant him O Lord".

**THE ALTAR** — Erected to the Glory of God and in memory of the Rev. Canon MacMorine, M.A. Twenty-one years Rector of this Parish. Died March 9th, 1909.

**THE ALTAR CROSS** — To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Edith M. Cooper, 1910-1939.

**THE ALTAR RAIL** — This Altar Rail has been erected to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Sally Cadham. Died November 4th, 1949.

**ALTAR BOOK** — To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Nellie Scott Garrioch, died July 15th, 1908 and Mary Evelyn Garrioch, died February 17th, 1921. Beloved daughters of W. Scott and Catherine Garrioch, January 1924.

**ALTAR DESK** — Presented by the Girl's Auxilliary — Advent, 1911.

**THE FONT** — In loving remembrance of Stuart Clare Georgen.

**THE FONT BOWL** — To the Glory of God and in loving memory of the boys christened at this font who fell in the service of Freedom, their King and their Country — 1939-1945. (There are the names of 12 young men inscribed on the Bowl.) Presented by Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Barber, June 1949.

**THE WEST DOORS** — These oak doors were presented to St. Mary's by G. P. Armstrong M.D., December, 1947.

## The House of Prayer

We love the place; O God,  
Wherein thine honour dwells;  
The joy of thine abode,  
All earthly joy excels.

It is the house of prayer,  
Wherein thy servants meet;  
And thou, O Lord, art there  
Thy chosen flock to greet.

We love the sacred font;  
For there the Holy Dove  
To pour is ever wont  
His blessings from above.

We love thine altar, Lord;  
O what on earth so dear?  
For there; in faith adored,  
We find thy presence near.

We love the word of life,  
The word that tells of peace,  
Of comfort in the strife,  
And joys that never cease.

We love to sing below  
For mercies freely given;  
But O we long to know  
The triumph song of heaven.

Lord Jesus, give us grace  
On earth to love thee more,  
In heaven to see thy face  
And with thy saints adore.

Dean Bullock, 1854, vv. 1-4;

Rev. Sir H. W. Baker, 1859, vv. 5-7





**PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE — 1853-1953**

Spreading outwards, from the highway,  
Stretching far as eye can see,  
Stand the rows of golden wheat stooks,  
Part of Autumn's Symphony.  
Yellow stubble fields, clean, close-clipped,  
Shorn of all their tawny manes  
Form a giant checker-board  
Against the black soil of the Plains.

Mother Nature's breasts free-flowing  
Here provide a bounteous store  
Of golden grain to feed the hungry  
While the world cries out for more.  
Laden freight trains rumble eastward  
Heading for the far off quays  
Where great ships wait with yawning hatches  
To carry food across the seas.

In this land of smiling promise  
Dwelt the pioneers of old  
Side by side with Crees and trappers,  
Diverse members of the fold  
Which that doughty churchman, Cochrane,  
Gathered in to turn the sod  
For that first small, humble building —  
St. Mary's Church, the house of God.

— E. F. S.

# APPENDIX

## HISTORICAL DATA OF INTEREST:

### 1. Extracts from Page One of the records of St. Mary's Parish:

**Marriage** — 1855 — Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church of St. Mary's la Prairie in the Diocese of Rupert's Land, April 3rd, 1856 between Thomas Anderson, bachelor, and Elizabeth DeMarais, spinster of this parish. Married in the Parish Church according to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church — Thomas Anderson and Elizabeth DeMarais by Me,

G. Hillyer, of the Church Missionary Society.

This marriage was solemnized between us: Thomas Anderson (his mark) X  
Elizabeth DeMarais (her mark) X  
in the presence of us — Robert Inkster.

**Baptism** — Solemnized in the Parish of St. Mary's la Prairie in the Diocese of Rupert's Land in the year 1855.

Henry Garrioch, son of William and Mary Garrioch, September 30th, 1855. The ceremony was performed by G. Hillyer.

**Burial** — October 3rd, 1855. Henry Garrioch, age 2 days. G. Hillyer.

**Note:** — The first dozen burial entries in the records are those of children. An epidemic of diphtheria struck the early settlement with disastrous effects on the lives of the children of the settlers.

### 2. Letters taken from the records of the Church Missionary Society:

- (a) Extract from letter of Rev. William Cochrane, August 4th, 1853.
- (b) Petition from Portage la Prairie, July 25th, 1853.
- (c) Extracts from Mr. W. W. Kirby's Journal, December 30th, 1852.
- (d) Letter from Rev. H. George, August 12th, 1867.

## CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY: 1854

Extract from letter from Rev. William Cochrane, dated 4th August 1853  
(Page 10)

### Portage la Prairie

In the spring of 1850 you authorized me, by the sanction of the Committee, to commence a station towards the west, to the south of Fairford. In the month of March I sent tobacco to the principal Indians who wandered over that quarter, to meet me at certain places in the month of May. At the beginning of this month I set out, with a certain party who were well acquainted with all the rivers and creeks which run into the Assiniboia. We travelled as far west as Beaver Creek, and found no suitable location beyond Portage la Prairie, about seventy-five miles west

of the Red River Settlement. To this place we turned our attention, and determined here to plant a settlement.

I went in June 1851, and fixed on a location, and contracted for a schoolroom. The timber was then cut, and hauled to the place, but owing to heavy rains and sickness, with the want of provisions, the original schoolroom was not built, but a smaller one, sufficient to accommodate forty children. In the winter of 1851-52, the Bishop kindly came forward and assisted to keep the school together.

Having sown the Mission farm at the rapids, I had a good stock of grain, which enabled me to be liberal to the most needy of the settlers, and children who were attending school. In the spring of 1852, though flood had deprived us of many of our resources, I was still able to extend sufficient help to keep the needy in their houses, and turn their attention to the cultivation of the soil. This spring I furnished them with a liberal supply of seed wheat. In the winter of 1852-53 the settlement and school held together. At Christmas Mr. T. Cochrane and Mr. Kirkby visited it; in February, Mr. Corbett; in March, Mr. Chapman. The Indians, and settlers have therefore lived in the hope of soon seeing a Missionary placed among them, and they have prepared all the timber for a Church and a grist-mill.

I herewith enclose their petition to the Committee of the Church Missionary Society, believing that you will tenderly sympathize with them in their spiritual wants. The cordial support which I have given to it, through so much opposition, is the best testimony that can be given of my conviction that it is for the glory of God, and the good of man, that Portage la Prairie should be occupied as a Missionary station. There are already 213 souls, who would all profit, and many of them be ultimately saved, through the grace of God, if a Missionary were placed there who would labour for their souls as one "who must give account".

**CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY RECORD: 1854 (Page 12)**

**Petition from Portage la Prairie**

Portage la Prairie,  
July 25th, 1853

To the Committee of The Church Missionary Society — The humble petition of the inhabitants and Indians of the Portage la Prairie — Humbly sheweth —

That your petitioners have been residing at the Portage la Prairie for nearly two years, that it now contains a population of 213 souls, Indians and half-breeds; and, that, during the above said period, we have been almost entirely deprived of the means of grace and of the ordinance of God's house, which we most sincerely lament.

That, after nearly two years' residence, your petitioners are of opinion that the Portage la Prairie affords many facilities for, and promises ere long to become, an extensive Missionary station, it being superior, and capable of cultivation to any extent; and having a goodly number of Indians around, who are really willing to give up their native habits, and

to adopt those of the civilized man, and who are anxious that a praying-master should be sent to them.

That your petitioners do earnestly beg of you to consider our case. We acknowledge that we are but few in number at present, and doubtless there are equally pressing calls made to you from other parts of the world, where there are thousands, but we dare not delay longer. The Roman Catholics have for some time had their eye on this place, and they have now promised that if twenty families of their persuasion will settle here they shall have a priest. We fear the results, as we know too well the paralyzing tendency of Popery. The Indians want an English praying-master, like father Cochrane. We have, in a measure, been brought up under the nurture of the Church Missionary Society. We are emphatically their children. We do not wish to be torn from our friend.

That the Lord may bless and guide you is the prayer of your humble petitioners,

Maskagoo

Paketahoond

Necannechewan

Capayontang

Cahwetawaywetang

Kehtochean

Moessons

Missähkut

Ohskennahwaysh

Nahcanwawetang

Appetowëcceckwap

And several other Indians, as well as many half-breeds.

#### SUNDRY ON ARCHDEACON COCHRANE 2

Rev. James Settee:

I saw that he had one aim, and that aim was to exalt his Saviour, and lead perishing heathen to Him.

#### CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY RECORD: 1854

**Note:** Rev. Thomas Cochrane (son of the Archdeacon) and Mr. W. W. Kirkby, the master at the Industrial School at the Rapids (St. Andrew's) visited Portage la Prairie at the end of 1852. Mr. Cochrane was then in Deacon's Orders. The Journal is Mr. Kirkby's.

**Dec. 30:** We reached the Portage about twelve o'clock. The people were delighted to see us. A nice little room was prepared for us, and a good fire was soon placed in it. After dinner we visited several families.

**Dec. 31:** We felt ourselves much refreshed by a comfortable night's rest. About ten o'clock Mr. Cochrane went to baptize two or three infants, and I commenced a survey of the place. I visited all, both settlers and Indians, taking at the same time a census of both. There are, at present, ten houses, in which live sixteen families, in number 112 souls; and seven Indian tents, inhabited by ten families, altogether thirty-three souls. The Indians have their tents nearly all together; the houses of the settlers are some distance from each other, stretching for about three miles along the margin of a kind of lake, which Mr. Cochrane calls the ancient channel of the Assiniboine, each having fixed upon the spot he thought best.

**Jan. 1, 1853:** ... At eleven o'clock we had service in the schoolroom; All, I believe were present. Mr. Cochrane preached from Gen. iv, 4, 5. The service terminated about one o'clock. We were then engaged until three in measuring and giving out flannel, calico, cloth, handkerchiefs, combs, etc., which we had purchased with the proceeds of a subscription which Mr.

Cochrane had made a few weeks before. Seldom had I been more satisfactorily employed, their gladdened countenances causing such a thrill of delight to run through my mind. We then read them a beautiful fatherly letter by the bishop in reply to their petition for a clergyman. The bishop assured them that he would do what he could for them. We then asked them what they would do towards building a church, and getting a house for a minister; and read them a paper, drawn up by Rev. W. Cochrane, containing the dimensions of the church, the number of logs, posts, couplers, etc., required for it; when, to our delight and satisfaction, they cheerfully undertook to cut the wood, dress it and place it on the spot. Everyone came forward to take his share; and, lest we should think they would not fulfil their engagement, they have fixed upon next Tuesday as the day when they are all to meet, take their axes and go into the woods to commence felling . . . . .

#### LETTER RECEIVED AT C.M.S. GENERAL COMMITTEE, AUGUST 12, 1867

In a letter recently received from Rev. H. George, the Society's Missionary at La Prairie, North West America, he thus writes:

"The Parish School is a great success. In the spring of 1865 there were not more than half a dozen who attended school: our number on the books is 63, and throughout the severe winter with which we have just parted, the average attendance has been 44. Our schoolmaster is very anxious to see our work prosper: faithful and diligent in his duties, desirous of falling in with my own views in every particular, of a quiet and unassuming disposition, and of a great consistency of life and conduct, he is an acquisition to the place. I feel very grateful for such a man. It has of late years been asserted that the people of the country are indifferent to the education of their children; this does not coincide with my own experience. The school of La Prairie is a bright spot, and if the eye of the Pastor is wearied with the naughtiness and vexations of the outer world, he has only to turn and look upon the many happy smiling faces which greet him on entering the schoolroom. This is indeed refreshment, and labouring for the lambs of Christ's flock is indeed a most blessed work. The parish is deeply indebted to the kind influence of Archdeacon Sinclair, which secured me a large supply of Prayer Books and school material from the Christian Knowledge Society. This has greatly assisted in making our work efficient. Sunday School is always kept by myself between the morning and evening services, for me a golden opportunity for reaching the hearts of my little hearers; fourteen young persons join the class: they take great interest in the lessons. Shortly I hope to form a class of Sunday School teachers out of them.

Our Sunday and extra services are well attended by members of our Church and Presbyterians. The responses are made very loud, and as one said the other day "as good as a book". The choir, led on by the school children and young persons, with the accompaniment of a good bass and tenor do well. A friend visiting said, that if one was conveyed, without knowledge, from the civilized world to this remote spot on Sunday morning,

he would not believe himself to be in the wilderness. Such testimony is very encouraging, and makes me feel very thankful . . . . On my coming here in May, 1865 I found the church-keeper unpaid by the people, dissatisfied and determined to retire. I engaged another one in his place, but only by assuring him that his salary would be met, myself becoming responsible for payment. Easter 1866 found the church in receipt of £66.11s.0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and Easter 1867 to the amount of £101.0s.6d. This is a great change for the better, and the people feel it to be so. It has had the effect of increasing ten-fold the interest in all that concerns Church and school, and they are beginning to learn the value of those precious words that "it is more blessed to give than to receive".

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY RECORD: 1867 page 3 and 4  
Selections from the Proceedings of the Committee.

#### SUNDRY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. The stained-glass windows in St. Mary's Church were designed by the Meikle Stained-Glass Studio, Toronto.
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View of the Interior of St. Mary's Church Looking toward the West Window.

